

And I might say, this is just the latest sterling example of what happens when we put the interests of our people and the values of our country throughout the world first and foremost. When we get beyond our partisan differences and reach to the depths of the human spirit and give light to our vision, we prove that we can advance the cause of America, improve the lives of our people, and, in this case, give hope to hundreds of millions living on the African Continent.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his

remarks, he referred to Ernest Micek, chief executive officer, Cargill, Inc.; Ambassador Roble Olhaye of Djibouti; Jack Kemp, 1996 Republican candidate for Vice President; James D. Wolfensohn, president, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; David Dinkins, chairman of the board, Constituency for Africa; Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, chairman and founder, Opportunities Industrialization Centers International; Andrew Young, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; C. Payne Lucas, president, Africare; and State President Nelson Mandela of South Africa.

Statement Announcing the Middle East Peace and Stability Fund *June 17, 1997*

I am delighted to announce today the creation of the Middle East Peace and Stability Fund. This new U.S. fund will draw on existing allocations of economic assistance to respond to urgent new needs in that region. The fund's initial focus will be on assisting Jordan as it pursues economic modernization and reform.

King Hussein has courageously led Jordan down the path of peace, exemplifying the wisdom and tenacity necessary to negotiate and carry out peace treaties. King Hussein's concern about his people and all the peoples of the Middle East is abundantly evident in his actions to bring about peace and reconciliation.

The fund we are creating today will draw its resources from redirection of a small percentage of the economic support funds supplied to Israel and Egypt. Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Mubarak both recognize the strategic importance of supporting economic growth in the region. They share my conviction that it is extremely important for the people of the Middle East to see tangible benefits when they turn from conflict to cooperation.

We envision a fund beginning with \$100 million this year, and it is our intention, in close consultation with Congress, to support the development of the fund over the next several years. In the coming days, we will work closely with the Jordanian authorities to identify the best ways to integrate these resources into existing development plans. Over time, this fund will be flexible enough to be used to support other regional priorities as needed.

We have had discussions with the Congress regarding this effort, and we will work together closely as we proceed. At a time of limited resources, we believe this fund is the most effective and practical way to respond to new needs. I will also be discussing this plan with other leaders at our summit in Denver next week, encouraging them to seek creative ways to meet the emerging needs in the Middle East.

I look forward to meeting Crown Prince Hassan on June 18 to discuss this initiative as well as other developments in the region.

Statement on Signing Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Legislation June 17, 1997

I am pleased to have signed into law H.R. 1871, the “1997 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Recovery from Natural Disasters, and for Overseas Peacekeeping Efforts, Including Those in Bosnia.”

This bill provides over \$5.8 billion so that Federal agencies can help the hundreds of thousands of people who have suffered terribly from the flooding and other natural disasters that have ravaged the Dakotas, Minnesota, California, and 29 other States. The bill also provides \$1.8 billion to replenish Department of Defense accounts in connection with our peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia and Southwest Asia, and to assure that the Department can maintain maximum readiness of the troops.

With regard to the funds described above, I hereby designate as emergency requirements all funds in this Act so designated by the Congress that I have not previously designated pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

I commend the Congress for approving my request to extend Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid benefits through the end of fiscal 1997 to all legal immigrants who would otherwise lose them. This approach ensures that the Congress has the time to restore SSI and Medicaid benefits for disabled legal immigrants, consistent with the recent Bipartisan Budget Agreement.

I am disappointed that the Congress chose to include several objectionable items that I identified in my veto message of June 9. Fund-

ing included in the bill for the Commission for the Advancement of Federal Law Enforcement not only will waste valuable Federal resources but also could interfere with Federal law enforcement policy and operations. As I indicated in my veto message, this type of oversight is more properly the role of the Congress, not an unelected commission.

I am also disappointed that the Congress chose to rescind funds for the Ounce of Prevention Council and the Department of Defense Dual-Use Applications Program. The Council will be forced to reduce the level of grants for youth substance abuse prevention, for which about 300 applications are under review. The reduction in the Dual-Use Applications program will result in higher costs of future defense systems.

On balance, however, this bill is a vast improvement over the legislation that I vetoed on June 9. It includes the desperately needed resources for our Nation’s hard-hit areas, but it does not include extraneous riders that had nothing to do with the goal of providing disaster relief. I am pleased that my Administration and the Congress worked together in a bipartisan fashion.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 17, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 1871, approved June 12, was assigned Public Law No. 105–18.

Remarks at “In Performance at the White House” June 17, 1997

The President. Thank you. Tonight we’re going to have a celebration of one of the most gifted singers and performers of the last four decades, Gladys Knight.

It’s a special honor to have her perform here at the White House because her music and her artistry are uniquely American. Some call it soul;

some call it rhythm and blues; some may even call it rock and roll. But the music Gladys helped to popularize really has much deeper and more spiritual roots in the rich gospel and soaring harmonies of the African-American church.